FCC MAIL SECTION



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION Washington, D.C.

DISPARATED BYDA 94-556

In the Matter of)
Local Exchange Carriers' Rates,	}
Terms, and Conditions for	<u> </u>
Expanded Interconnection for) CC Docket No. 93-162 V
Special Access)

SUPPLEMENTAL DESIGNATION ORDER AND ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

Adopted: May 27, 1994; Released: May 31, 1994

Supplemental Direct Cases: June 15, 1994

Oppositions: June 22, 1994

By the Deputy Chief, Common Carrier Bureau:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. On June 9, 1993, the Common Carrier Bureau (Bureau) released the <u>Suspension Order</u>¹ which, <u>inter alia</u>, partially suspended the special access expanded interconnection tariffs filed by the Tier 1 local exchange carriers (LECs)² and initiated an investigation into the lawfulness of these tariffs. On July 23, 1993, the Bureau released a <u>Designation Order</u>³ in the above-captioned docket, which designated issues to be investigated and directed LECs to file direct cases regarding the rate levels, rate structures, and terms and conditions in the special access expanded interconnection tariffs. In the instant Order, we designate additional issues to be investigated and establish a pleading cycle. These issues,

¹ Local Exchange Carriers' Rates, Terms, and Conditions for Expanded Interconnection for Special Access, CC Docket No. 93-162, 8 FCC Rcd 4589 (Com.Car.Bur. 1993) (Suspension Order).

These LECs are listed in Appendix A of the <u>Suspension Order</u>. We note that the Centel Telephone Company, as it was known in prior Orders, is now the Central Telephone Company. In addition, we now refer collectively to Central Telephone Company and United Telephone Company, which filed all pleadings in this investigation jointly, as United/Central.

³ Local Exchange Carriers' Rates, Terms and Conditions for Expanded Interconnection for Special Access, CC Docket No. 93-162, 8 FCC Rcd 6909 (Com.Car.Bur. 1993) (Designation Order).

which relate to certain LECs' use of time and materials charges for central office construction for physical collocation, were raised by a number of parties that commented on the LECs' direct cases.

II. BACKGROUND - CONSTRUCTION CHARGES

A. Expanded Interconnection Order

- 2. On October 19, 1992, the Commission released the Expanded Interconnection Order, CC Docket No. 91-141,⁵ which required Tier 1 LECs to file tariffs offering expanded interconnection for special access services to all interested parties.⁶ In light of the LECs' substantial market power over expanded interconnection offerings, the Commission established certain tariffing requirements to prevent anticompetitive pricing and discrimination.⁷
- 3. The Commission required that the cross-connect element and any future contribution charge be provided pursuant to generally available tariffs at study area-wide averaged rates. The Commission stated that since these elements will be fairly standard, there would be no need for the greater flexibility that is possible with use of individually negotiated tariff provisions. The Commission also determined that with respect to "certain other connection charge rate elements," charges under general tariffs may reasonably differ by central office due to variations in costs -- but should be uniform for all interconnectors in each individual central office. For physical collocation, these charges include labor and materials charges for initial preparation of central office space. The Commission noted that if different interconnectors desire arrangements that require different amounts of time (i.e., labor) and materials to construct, total charges could

⁴ The terms "time and materials charges" and "labor and materials charges" are used interchangeably throughout this Order.

Expanded Interconnection with Local Telephone Company Facilities, CC Docket No. 91-141, Report and Order and Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 7 FCC Rcd 7369 (1992) (Expanded Interconnection Order), recon., 8 FCC Rcd 127 (1992); further modified on recon. 8 FCC Rcd 7341 (1993); other pets. for recon. pending, appeal pending sub nom., Bell Atlantic Corp. v. FCC, No. 92-1619 (D.C. Cir., filed Nov. 25, 1992).

⁶ Expanded Interconnection Order, 7 FCC Rcd at 7372; 7398. The Expanded Interconnection Order excluded NECA pool members from this filing requirement. This effectively excluded only Puerto Rico Telephone Company, which is the only Tier 1 LEC that is also a NECA pool member. <u>Id.</u> at 7398.

⁷ Id. at 7441-42.

The Commission also included charges for central office space usage under physical collocation, and other charges that reasonably can be standardized for each central office, such as those for power, environmental conditioning, and use of riser and conduit space. <u>Id.</u> at 7442.

reflect these differences, but the unit charges for labor and material should be uniform in each central office.

- 4. Because it concluded that time and materials charges for central office construction reasonably can be standardized within each central office, the Commission did not allow individually negotiated tariffed arrangements for central office construction. By contrast, the Commission stated that rates for the use of different types of central office electronic equipment dedicated to interconnectors under virtual collocation arrangements are "best tailored to reflect individual circumstances." 10
- 5. On February 16, 1993, the LECs filed tariffs pursuant to the Expanded Interconnection Order. In their physical collocation tariffs, most LECs proposed to charge specific rates for central office construction, which includes both site preparation and cage construction. Bell Atlantic and US West, however, proposed to tariff all central office construction on an individual case basis (ICB). Lincoln's tariff proposed specific rates, except for an "Application Fee" that functioned as an ICB. 11 Rochester stated that nonrecurring costs will be calculated on a "fully allocated" time and materials basis, and would be specified in its tariff. 12 Rochester, however, did not specify unit charges in its tariff. United/Central stated that it would charge for all cage construction on a time and materials basis, but did not tariff specific unit charges. 13 United/Central also included a tariff provision that suggests it would develop rates for construction in response to individual customer requests. 14

⁹ See id. Further, the Commission stated that labor and materials charges may include appropriate overhead loadings and may differ by type of personnel or by time of day. <u>Id</u>. at 7442 n.356.

¹⁰ <u>Id</u>. at 7442. The Commission stated that although it would allow LECs and interconnectors to negotiate the rates, terms, and conditions of such connection charge subelements, it will require the LECs to file these rates, terms, and conditions, which must then be made available to all similarly situated interconnectors under tariff. <u>Id</u>. at 7442-43.

¹¹ The \$7,500 Application Fee would be adjusted to reflect the actual cost of the service preparation and cable installation.

¹² See Rochester Telephone Corporation, Tariff F.C.C. No. 1, Transmittal No. 193, Section 7.8.2 (C)(3) (filed May 20, 1993; effective June 16, 1993).

¹³ See United and Central Companies, Tariff F.C.C. No. 1, Section 17.6(D)(11), Transmittal No. 1 (filed Feb. 15, 1994; effective Mar. 2, 1994). United/Central also stated that if it must install environmental support to prepare the space for collocation, the charges will be calculated and billed to the interconnector on a time and materials basis. See id.

¹⁴ See United and Central Companies, Tariff F.C.C. No. 1, Transmittal No. 1, Section 17.6 (C) (filed Feb. 15, 1994; effective Mar. 2, 1994) (provision also in earlier United and Central tariffs that were cancelled by Transmittal No. 1). That provision states in pertinent part: "When an interconnector submits a bona fide request for physical collocation ... the Telephone Company will develop the rates and charges applicable for collocation of the Interconnector's equipment and facilities at the requested location. The Telephone Company

B. Comments on Time and Materials Charges in Petitions Against Expanded Interconnection Tariffs

- 6. In petitions to reject or suspend and investigate the expanded interconnection tariffs, several parties objected to the LECs' use of ICB pricing and of time and materials charges as defined in their tariffs. MFS alleged that ICB pricing for cage construction violates the Expanded Interconnection Order. Ohio PUC disputed United's time and materials provision, arguing that United/Central should have generally tariffed rates for central office construction. According to Ohio PUC, interconnectors will be substantially disadvantaged if the LEC can later specify a significant charge. 17
- 7. In their replies to the petitions, Rochester and Bell Atlantic defended their time and materials charges and ICB rates, respectively. They argued that the construction costs associated with making space ready for interconnectors to occupy are not susceptible to a uniform tariffed rate because they depend on the amount, location, and configuration of the interconnector's space.¹⁸
- 8. United/Central explained that in addition to its time and materials rate provision, it offers customers the option of construction through a third party contractor that is satisfactory to the carrier and the customer. According to United/Central, this option removes the ability of United/Central to inflate construction costs. United/Central objected to providing fixed construction rates in its tariff, arguing that its ratepayers should not be forced to bear the risk of changes in outside labor and materials charges or imprecise estimation of the average cost of cage configurations -- particularly when United/Central lacks experience in cage construction. In addition, United/Central maintained that adoption of a standard cage design would not be in the best interests of customers needing different designs. Finally, United/Central claimed that site preparation (including extension of heating, air conditioning, power, and fire protection systems) is

shall file the rates and charges in this tariff within 45 days' [sic] of the date of the request, to become effective upon 45 days' notice."

¹⁵ See, e.g., Teleport Petition at App. A Item 22; MCI Petition at 7; Ad Hoc Petition at 15-17.

¹⁶ MFS Petition at 30; 45.

¹⁷ Ohio PUC Petition at 6.

¹⁸ Bell Atlantic Reply at App. A Item 3; Rochester Reply at 4-5.

¹⁹ United/Central Reply at 8-9.

²⁰ In its petition to reject the expanded interconnection tariffs, discussed <u>supra</u>, MFS noted with approval United/Central's tariff provision that permits a mutually agreed-upon contractor selected by the interconnector to construct the cage. MFS claims that if LECs offered this option, there would be no need for an investigation of central office construction charges. MFS Petition at 30 n.69.

not a function that is susceptible to being offered at a fixed rate because the design and installation of these systems varies significantly from office to office.²¹

C. The Bureau's Suspension Order

- 9. In the <u>Suspension Order</u>, the <u>Bureau</u>, <u>inter alia</u>, explained that while the <u>Expanded Interconnection Order</u> permits uniform per unit pricing (labor charges for each type of worker and unit charges by type and quantity of material) for some physical collocation rate elements, it does not permit ICB pricing for physical collocation rate elements. Accordingly, the <u>Bureau</u> ordered <u>LECs</u> that tariffed any or all physical collocation rate elements as ICBs -- Bell Atlantic, US West, Lincoln, and United/Central -- to delete references to ICB charges from their physical collocation tariffs. These LECs were directed to tariff specific rates or time and materials charges.²³
- 10. In their compliance filings, Bell Atlantic, US West, and Lincoln deleted references to ICB charges. US West and Lincoln tariffed specific rates for cage construction and site preparation. Bell Atlantic tariffed specific rates for cage construction, but stated that it would tariff all other construction on a time and materials basis. As discussed in Section V., infra, United/Central did not revise its tariff pursuant to the Suspension Order.

D. Comments on Time and Materials Charges in Oppositions to Direct Cases

- 11. While the Bureau's <u>Designation Order</u> did not ask the parties to comment on the LECs' time and material charges for central office construction, Ohio PUC, MFS, and Teleport object to such charges in their oppositions to the direct cases. Ohio PUC opposes United's time and materials charges on the ground that interconnectors may find themselves saddled with significant business expenses upon occupancy. Further, Ohio PUC observes, other LECs have quantified charges that reasonably allow recovery of the central office construction charge.²⁴
- 12. MFS asserts that Bell Atlantic's proposal to replace its ICB rates with hourly rates for an unspecified amount of labor hours and unspecified materials costs raises concerns that Bell Atlantic will impose unreasonable charges upon competitors seeking collocation. MFS urges the Commission to require Bell Atlantic to file specific central office preparation charges accompanied by full cost support, as other LECs have done. Finally, Teleport contends that Bell Atlantic's description of its time and materials charges

United/Central Reply at 9-11.

²² Suspension Order, 8 FCC Rcd at 4600.

²³ <u>**Id**</u>.

²⁴ Ohio PUC Opposition at 3-4.

²⁵ MFS Opposition at 17-18.

for large portions of its construction activities fails to comply with the Commission's requirement that LECs specify these costs and rates.²⁶

13. In its rebuttal, United/Central defends its time and materials charges for cage construction and space preparation.²⁷ According to United/Central, uniform prices are inappropriate when the amount of space to be occupied is not necessarily standard.²⁸ United/Central also asserts that construction costs will not be uniform, and objects to averaging costs to arrive at a uniform rate. Finally, United/Central submits that concerns about unexpected charges are alleviated through quotes available prior to construction, as well as its option of allowing customers to use independent contractors to perform cage construction.²⁹ Bell Atlantic justifies its time and materials charges on the ground that space preparation costs vary widely and unforeseen costs may be incurred when the work actually begins. Bell Atlantic considers it reasonable to charge the customer for the exact amount of time and materials needed to prepare the space.³⁰

E. Bell Atlantic Transmittal No. 613

- 14. On November 18, 1993, Bell Atlantic filed Transmittal No. 613, which took effect on February 16, 1994 subject to the Docket 93-162 investigation.³¹ In Transmittal No. 613, Bell Atlantic proposed a number of revisions relating to its charges for central office construction.³² For example, Bell Atlantic proposed to submit estimates within 25 days of receiving a request for construction of a cage.
- 15. MFS filed an opposition, arguing that a procedure whereby Bell Atlantic would provide estimates of construction charges to potential collocators would be tantamount to establishing charges through an independent contract rather than by filing tariff revisions. MFS characterizes Bell Atlantic's filing as an ICB rate and asserts that it violates the prohibition against ICB pricing in the <u>Suspension Order</u>. MFS urges Bell

²⁶ Teleport Opposition, App. A at 4.

United/Central, however, does not mention the section of its tariff that suggests it will develop rates in response to individual customer requests. See footnote 14, supra.

United/Central notes that a customer may request and, when appropriate, receive more or less than 100 square feet of space. United/Central Rebuttal at 5 n.10.

²⁹ Id. at 4-6.

³⁰ Bell Atlantic Rebuttal, Attachment at 5. According to Bell Atlantic, its approach is similar to that used by other landlords and building contractors and recognizes that collocators may have different needs.

³¹ Bell Atlantic Telephone Companies, Transmittal No. 613, CC Docket No. 93-162, 9 FCC Rcd 976 (Com.Car.Bur. 1994).

³² As mentioned, supra, Bell Atlantic tariffed specific rates for cages, but stated that it would tariff all other construction on a time and materials basis.

Atlantic to file revisions that list specific rates for the construction function in each of its central offices.³³

16. Bell Atlantic replies that it will file the actual construction charges in its collocation tariff after construction is completed, instead of filing the estimate before the start of construction. According to Bell Atlantic, collocators request changes in specific features during construction that would require filing a number of revisions to the price estimates. Therefore, Bell Atlantic argues, filing actual charges after construction is completed will eliminate the need to file a number of tariff revisions and will allow it to accommodate collocators' requests for customized construction more efficiently.³⁴

III. DISCUSSION

- 17. In the telecommunications industry, carriers typically develop specific charges appearing in generally available tariffs based on averaged costs. Pricing access services on an individual case basis thus represents a departure from normal practice and is usually reserved for unique or unusual common carrier service offerings for which the carrier does not yet have sufficient experience to develop general rates. Rather than basing initial rates on averaged costs, carriers develop rates in response to each customer request for the service. Once sufficient knowledge is gained about the costs of the service, the Commission requires that the ICB rates be converted to averaged rates applicable to all customers.³⁵
- 18. In the Expanded Interconnection Order, the Commission did not permit ICB pricing for certain connection charge elements, including the labor and material charges for initial preparation of central office space under physical collocation. Rather, the Commission reasoned that the need to protect interconnectors from anticompetitive pricing and discrimination by the LECs outweighed the LECs' need to be able to structure such charges to meet the individual needs of interconnectors. The Commission, however, did permit carriers to develop generally available tariffs containing different time and materials charges for different central offices. The Commission explained that if different physical interconnection arrangements require different amounts of time and materials to construct, the construction charges for interconnectors could be different, provided the unit charges for labor and material are uniform for all interconnectors that take service in each individual central office. In the Suspension Order, we reiterated the

³³ MFS Opposition at 1-2.

³⁴ Bell Atlantic Reply at 1-2.

³⁵ See generally Local Exchange Carriers' Individual Case Basis DS3 Service Offerings, CC Docket No. 88-136, 4 FCC Rcd 8634 (1989), on recon., 5 FCC Rcd 4842 (1990). The filing of an individual case basis rate does not affect the general availability of a service offering. Individual case basis rates are "generally available" if tariffs embodying these rates are filed and are available to all similarly situated customers. See id. at 8642 (citing Sea Land Services, Inc. v. ICC, 738 F.2d 1311, 1317 (D.C. Cir. (1990)).

Expanded Interconnection Order, 7 FCC Rcd at 7441-42.

Commission's conclusion that uniform per unit pricing -- but not ICB pricing -- is permitted for central office construction.³⁷

19. Based on the record now before us, it appears that Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester, those LECs who state that they tariffed central office construction on a time and materials basis, misunderstood the Commission's discussion of time and materials charges in the Expanded Interconnection Order. These LECs have not tariffed time and materials charges on a per unit basis, as directed by the Expanded Interconnection Order. Although they state that their rates are based on time and materials charges, they do not display particular charges in their tariffs and instead imply that they will develop rates for construction in response to individual customer requests, i.e., on an ICB basis.

IV. ISSUE DESIGNATED

- 20. Accordingly, we designate for investigation the issue of whether the foregoing LECs' approach to time and materials charges for central office construction is reasonable in light of the Commission's Expanded Interconnection Order. To assist in our resolution of this issue, Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester are directed to provide the information listed below. We invite interested parties to comment on the LECs' supplemental direct cases.
- 1. Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester should explain how their approach to time and materials charges differs from the use of individual case basis rates.
- 2. In the Expanded Interconnection Order, the Commission described time and materials charges as generally available rates that vary based on the labor and materials needed for construction in individual central offices. Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester should explain why they should not be required to provide time and materials charges through a "menu" of specific prices for different service components (such as rates for wire mesh cages; rates for wallboard cages; cages with/without air conditioning, etc.). This would make the LECs' total cage construction and site preparation charges easier to predict from the outset. Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester should discuss whether the Commission should prescribe this method of tariffing time and materials charges.
- 3. Bell Atlantic and United/Central state that an estimate of charges will be provided prior to construction. After construction is completed, these LECs will reconcile estimates with the actual costs of construction and file tariffed rates based on actual costs.
 - (a) These LECs should describe their procedures for developing pre-construction estimates and submitting these estimates to interconnectors. For example, these LECs should address: whether estimates will be in writing; whether estimates will be itemized; how long after receiving a request for construction the LEC will submit an estimate; how long the estimate will remain valid; how an interconnector

³⁷ Suspension Order, 8 FCC Rcd at 4600.

must accept an estimate; and the LEC's policies regarding payment of estimated charges. LECs should cite existing tariff provisions to support their responses.

- (b) Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and interested parties should address whether LECs should be required to limit the amount they may charge interconnectors to the pre-construction estimate. Alternatively, parties should address whether LECs should be required to cap the amount they may charge interconnectors over the pre-construction estimate, e.g., 10 percent. 32
- 4. United/Central's tariff permits a "mutually agreed upon contractor selected by the Interconnector" to construct the cage. Parties should comment on the usefulness of this option in keeping LECs' cage construction charges just and reasonable. United/Central should provide details regarding its arrangement, such as the criteria it uses to approve contractors selected by interconnectors.

V. UNITED/CENTRAL -- ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

21. Despite the <u>Suspension Order</u>'s directive to delete references to ICB pricing, United/Central retained a tariff provision that suggests it would develop rates for construction in response to individual customer requests.³⁹ Further, subsequent to the filing of its direct case, United/Central proposed an individualized rate for Teleport Communications Group that it characterized as an "individual case basis filing."⁴⁰ United/Central is hereby directed to show cause why it did not comply with our <u>Suspension Order</u> and why it should not be required to delete all references to ICB pricing in its expanded interconnection tariff.

Previously, the Commission has required LECs to provide their customers with estimates of anticipated charges for expedited access orders and to cap the actual charges assessed at no more than 10 percent over such estimates. See, e.g., Annual 1985 Access Tariff Filings, Phase II, 2 FCC Rcd 1416 (1987).

³⁹ See United and Central Companies, Tariff F.C.C. No. 1, Transmittal No. 1, Section 17.6 (C) (filed Feb. 15, 1994; effective Mar. 2, 1994) (provision also in earlier United and Central tariffs that were cancelled by Transmittal No. 1). That provision states in pertinent part: "When an interconnector submits a bona fide request for physical collocation ... the Telephone Company will develop the rates and charges applicable for collocation of the Interconnector's equipment and facilities at the requested location. The Telephone Company shall file the rates and charges in this tariff within 45 days' [sic] of the date of the request, to become effective upon 45 days' notice."

⁴⁰ See United and Central Companies, Tariff F.C.C. No. 1, Transmittal No. 244 (replaced by Transmittal No. 1, Section 17.9(C)). No petitions were filed against this transmittal, and it took effect on February 13, 1994.

VI. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- 22. Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester (which have already been designated as parties to this proceeding) shall file their supplemental direct cases no later than June 15, 1994. The supplemental direct cases must present these carriers' positions with respect to the issue described in this Order. Pleadings responding to the supplemental direct cases may be filed no later than June 22, 1994, and must be captioned "Opposition to Supplemental Direct Case" or "Comments on Supplemental Direct Case."
- 23. United/Central shall file an Answer to our Order to Show Cause concurrently with its Supplemental Direct Case. That Answer shall include all information necessary to respond to the allegations and matters contained in this Order to Show Cause. United/Central may combine into one document its Answer and its Supplemental Direct Case, as long as each section is identified clearly.
- 24. An original and seven copies of all pleadings shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission. In addition, parties shall file two copies of any such pleadings with the Tariff Division, Common Carrier Bureau, Room 518, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554. Parties shall also deliver one copy of such pleadings to the Commission's commercial copying firm, International Transcription Service, 2100 M Street, N.W., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20037. Members of the general public who wish to express their views in an informal manner regarding the issues in this investigation may do so by submitting one copy of their comments to the Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 222, Washington, D.C. 20554. Such comments should specify the docket number of this investigation.
- 25. All relevant and timely pleadings will be considered by the Commission. In reaching a decision, the Commission may take into account information and ideas not contained in pleadings, provided that such information is placed in the public file, and provided that the fact of reliance on such information is noted in the Order.

VII. ORDERING CLAUSES

- 26. IT IS ORDERED, pursuant to Sections 4(i), 4(j), 201-205, and 403 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i), 154(j), 201(b), 203(c), 204(a), 205, and 403, that the issue set forth in this Order IS DESIGNATED FOR INVESTIGATION.
- 27. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Bell Atlantic, United/Central, and Rochester (which have already been designated as parties to the proceeding in CC Docket 93-162) SHALL INCLUDE, in their supplemental direct cases, a response to each request for information that they are required to answer in Section IV of this Order.
- 28. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to Sections 205(a), 4(i), 213, 218, 220, and 403 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. §§ 205(a), 154(i), 213, 218, 220, 403, and Section 1.701 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. § 1.701, that the United and Central Telephone Companies are directed to SHOW CAUSE why they should not

be required to delete references to individual case base pricing in their expanded interconnection tariff.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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